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UTILIZATION OF REFERENCE SERVICES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF GOA

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Abstract: *Goa. It examines how these services are utilized and identifies the diverse information needs of users. The findings indicate that users of Goa public libraries seek a wide range of information and rely significantly on reference services to meet their needs. However, their requirements often differ from those of other professional groups, highlighting the need for tailored and user-centric services. A key concern among users is accessing accurate and relevant information in a timely manner. In the current era of information explosion, the challenge of obtaining the right information at the right time has become increasingly significant. This underscores the critical role of effective reference services in supporting users' informational requirements. Although existing public libraries in Goa are generally able to meet users' needs satisfactorily, the study reveals scope for further improvement in the overall library and information system. It emphasizes the necessity for developing a robust network of public and academic libraries to facilitate resource sharing and enhance service efficiency. Strengthening reference services through better organization, updated resources, and improved access mechanisms is also recommended. In conclusion, while the current system functions adequately, strategic enhancements—particularly in networking and service delivery—can significantly improve the effectiveness of reference services, ensuring timely and accurate information access for all users.*

Keywords: *Public libraries, reference services, information needs, user Satisfaction*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of information explosion, information has emerged as a crucial resource for the development of individuals, societies, and nations. It plays a central role in decision-making, education, and research, making it indispensable for human progress. Libraries, as knowledge centers, rely heavily on reference sources, which form the backbone of their services. Reference services act as an essential link between users and information resources, helping them locate accurate and relevant information efficiently (Krishan, 1982; Mahajan, 2001; Ram, 2020). With the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Internet, the nature of reference services has undergone a significant transformation. Initially dependent on print resources, libraries have increasingly adopted digital tools and platforms to enhance accessibility and efficiency. Digital reference services, including email, chat, and web-based assistance, have become integral components of modern libraries (Lankes, 2000; Janes, 2002; Sharma, 2004; Kumar Das, 2015; Khan, 2015). The evolution of reference services has also been influenced by the growing need for information literacy. Librarians not only assist users in finding information but also guide them in evaluating sources and developing effective search strategies. This educational role of reference services is vital in

enabling users to navigate complex information environments (Beck, 2010; Gandhi, 2004; Fritch, 2001). Moreover, the increasing use of mobile technologies and social media has further expanded the scope of reference services, allowing libraries to reach users beyond physical boundaries (Baker, 2014; Kroski, 2008; Needham, 2008). Virtual reference services have enhanced user engagement and satisfaction by providing real-time assistance and personalized support (Penzhorn, 2010; Ramos, 2012; Broughton, 2012).

Despite these advancements, challenges such as unequal access to digital resources, lack of infrastructure, and varying user needs continue to affect the effectiveness of reference services (Kaur, 2019; Maru, 2021; Kale, 2022). Public libraries, particularly in developing regions, must adopt innovative strategies and collaborative approaches to improve service delivery and ensure equitable access to information.

In conclusion, reference services remain a fundamental component of library operations. Their continuous evolution, driven by technological advancements and changing user expectations, highlights their importance in promoting information access, literacy, and lifelong learning in the digital age (Tyckoson, 2011; Gibson, 2013; Thorpe, 2017).

II.LITERATURE REVIEW :

The literature on reference services highlights a significant transformation from traditional to digital environments driven by technological advancements. Aba (2017) emphasized the role of computer technologies in enhancing efficiency and accessibility of reference services, while Ali (2016) and Asad Khan (2017) identified the growing use of digital tools along with challenges such as lack of infrastructure and training. Arndt (2010) and Arya (2012) discussed the shift towards virtual and user-centered reference services, supported by various digital platforms. Studies by Atilgan (2006) and Bhatia (2007) revealed an increasing dependence on digital libraries and electronic resources, indicating a transition from print to digital formats. Baker (2014), Barlie (2010), and Beaton (2008) highlighted the impact of mobile technologies and social media in expanding access and improving user engagement. Beck (2010) and Gandhi (2004) stressed the importance of information literacy and knowledge management in effective reference service delivery. Similarly, Bosque (2012) and Broughton (2012) demonstrated the effectiveness of real-time and social media-based reference services in improving user satisfaction. Chattopadhyay (2018), Chowdhury (2002), and David (2015) focused on the role of e-resources and digital libraries in modern reference services. De Silva (2007) emphasized evaluation and quality improvement, while Devi (2024) and Dhavle (2014) discussed the evolution and challenges of reference services in the digital era. Fritch (2001), Gibson (2013), and Janes (2002) further highlighted the need for adaptability and innovation in response to changing user expectations. Overall, the literature indicates that reference services are becoming more dynamic, technology-driven, and user-oriented, requiring continuous adaptation to meet evolving information needs.

Objectives:

1. To examine the concept of Modern reference services.
2. To analyze the different reference requirement of the users of Public Libraries in Goa.
3. To identify the facilities available in reference services for users of Public Libraries in Goa.
4. To evaluate whether presently available reference services at Public Libraries in Goa are satisfying the needs of users in Goa.
5. To assess the measures for improvement of reference services for users in Public Libraries of Goa.

Data analysis and interpretation involve organizing collected data, deriving meaningful conclusions, and understanding their significance and implications. The process depends on the type of data collected and focuses on identifying patterns, relationships, and insights to support research objectives. In qualitative research, analysis is often continuous and interactive, where data collection and interpretation occur simultaneously. Interpretation helps connect findings with existing knowledge and provides a theoretical basis for future research. It enables deeper understanding, explains underlying reasons behind findings, and supports further investigation. Data analysis is a crucial stage in the research process, following problem formulation, literature review, research design, and data collection. It involves systematically examining and organizing data to extract relevant information, draw conclusions, and aid decision-making. For this study, a total of 1500 questionnaires were distributed, including 500 to librarians of “Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library” and 1000 to readers. Out of these, 850 valid responses were received and selected as the sample for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 56.66%. These responses formed the basis for data analysis and interpretation in the study.

Public libraries of Goa:

Sr. No.	Name of the Libraries	Number of Libraries
1	Central Library (Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library)	1
2	District Library (Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library)	1
3	Taluka Libraries (GTL – Valpoi, Ponda, Bicholim, Curchorem, Sanguem, Canacona, Mandrem)	7
4	Nagar/Town Libraries (Quepem, Cuncolim, Sankhali)	3
5	Village Panchayat N.G.O. Libraries	152

Table.no. 1: Public libraries of Goa

Data Analysis :

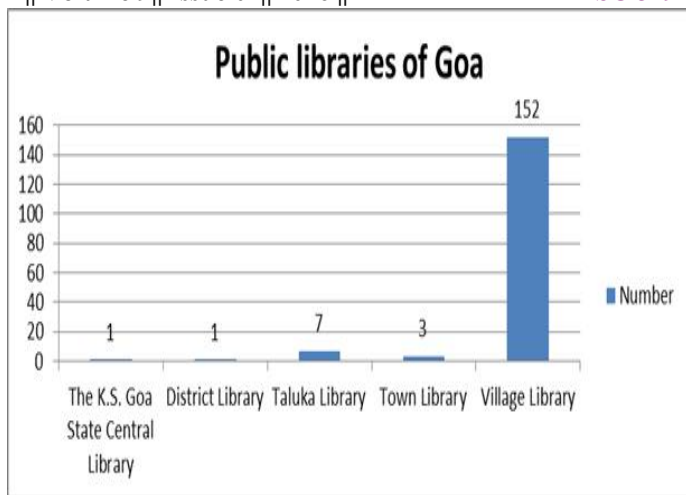


Figure 1: Public Libraries of Goa

Gender	Respondents
Male	372
Female	478
Total	850

DGLG - 2010, GTLV- 1976, GTLP-2002, GTLB-1984, GTLC-1975, GTLS-1988, GTLCA-1976, GTLM-2004, GNQ-2017, GNC-2018 and GNS-2021.

Gender:

Table .no.3: Gender

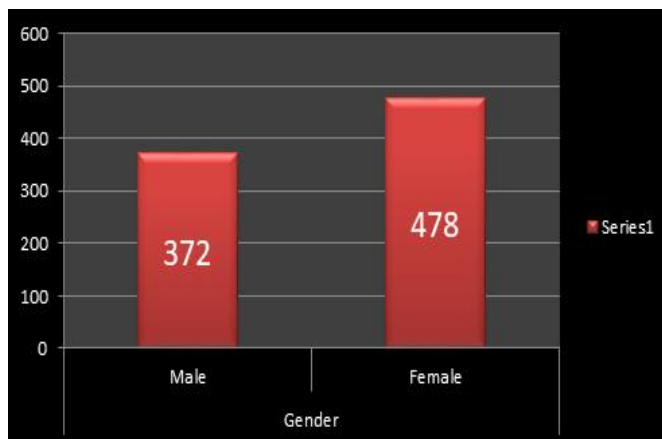


Figure 3: Gender

With the below table, one can examine that is 73.5% respondents of the result found that male respondents whereas only 26.5% respondents were female.

The accompanying graph outline compares to the equivalent.

Years of Establishment

KSGS CL	DFLG	GTLV	GTL P	GTL B	GTL C	GT LS	GTL CA	GTL M	G N Q	G N C	G N S
1832	2010	1976	2002	1984	1975	1988	1976	2004	2017	2018	2021

Table.no.2: Years of Establishment

Library users:

KSGS CL	DFLG	GT LV	GT LP	GT LB	GT LC	GT LS	GTL CA	GT LM	G N Q	G N C	G N S
40817	13658	3819	12406	3402	6626	1264	3956	3509	1363	1629	2115

Table 4: Total number of registered Library users till 2025

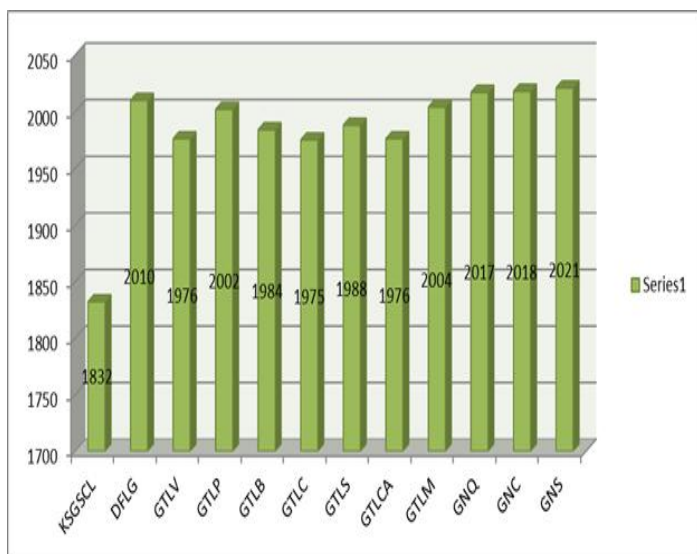


Figure .2: Years of Establishment

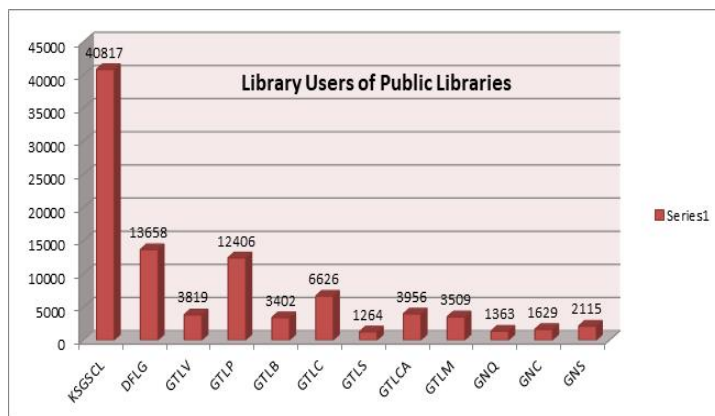


Figure 4: Total number of registered Library users

According to the finding of the survey Years of establishment of the surveyed libraries are given in the Table 1.2 and in the chart format in Fig.1.2. According the findings KSGSCL is the oldest public library in Asia and was established in the year 1832.

According to the finding of the survey regarding library users of the surveyed libraries are given in the Table and in the chart format in Fig. according the findings KSGSCL has maximum users in the library, more than 40817 registered in the KSGSCL library, DFLG have 13658 registered users, GTLV have 3819 registered library users, GTLP have 12406, GTLB 3402, GTLC have 6626, GTLS have 1264, GTLCA have 3956, GTLM have 3509, GNQ have 1363, GNC have 1629 and GNS have 2115 registered users to use the library facilities.

Librarian Responses from Different Public Libraries in Goa:

Since KSGSCL is the oldest Public library in India. The category of users are more comparatively to the other libraries. It is located at the Centre place and hence convenient for the users to take its benefit.

Sr. No.	Library	Respondent
1	KSGSCL	401
2	DFLG	130
3	GTLV	18
4	GTLP	102
5	GTLB	10
6	GTLC	32
7	GTLS	12
8	GTLCA	41
9	GTLM	21
10	GNQ	10
11	GNC	12
12	GNS	61
	TOTAL	850

Table.no.5: Users and Librarian Responses from Different Public Libraries in Goa

Satisfaction with Library collection:

Type of material	Responses	Percentage (1500)	Valid Percentage (850)	Total Percentage
Text Books	214	14.26	25.17	25.17
Reference books	272	18.13	32	57.17
Journals	41	2.73	4.82	61.99
Magazines	128	8.5	15.05	77.04
Newspapers	108	7.2	12.70	89.74
Thesis	34	2.2	4	93.74
Digital information	53	3.5	6.2	99.99
Total	850			

Table.no.6. Satisfaction with Library collection

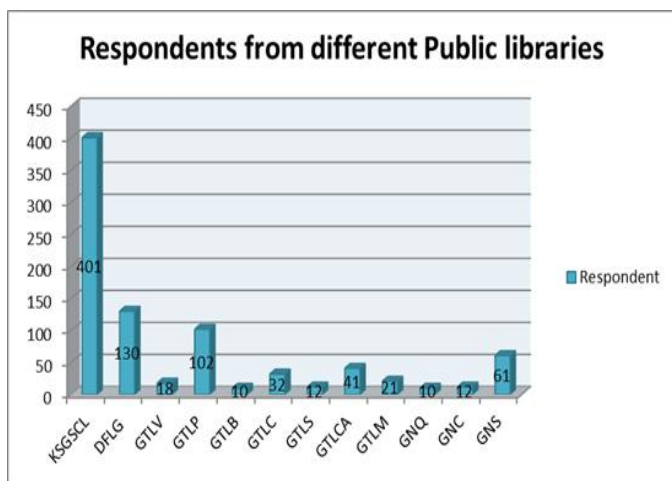


Figure.5: User and Librarian Responses from Different Public Libraries in Goa

As per the survey conducted by the researcher. on the behalf of that survey researchers received the 850 responses from the users of targeted Public Libraries in Goa and responses described in the table given above on the basis of survey. The above bar graph depicts respondents from different public libraries of Goa. The users and librarians from KSGSCL secures highest with 401 respondents followed by DFLG with 130 respondents. GTLP-102, GNS-61, GTLCA-41, GTLC-32, GTLM-21, GTLV-18, GTLS and GNC- 12, GTLB and GNQ- 10 respondents accordingly.

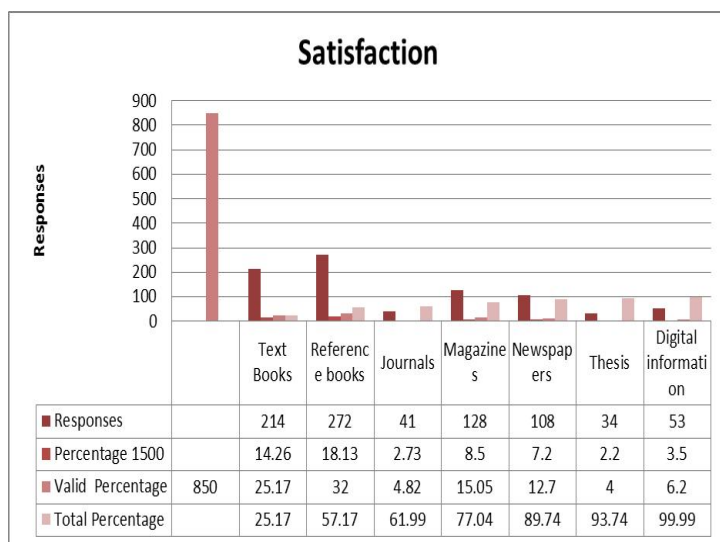


Figure .6. Satisfaction with Library collection

III.CONCLUSION :

The present study on “Utilization of Reference Services in Public Libraries of Goa” highlights the crucial role of reference services in meeting the diverse information needs of users in the era of information explosion. The findings reveal that users place significant importance on accessing accurate and timely information, making effective reference services an essential component of public library systems. Although the existing libraries in Goa are able to satisfactorily fulfill the basic

information and reference needs of users, there remains considerable scope for improvement in service quality and accessibility. The study concludes that strengthening the current library and information system is necessary to enhance overall efficiency and user satisfaction. In particular, the establishment of a well-structured network connecting public and academic libraries in Goa would facilitate resource sharing, optimize available information resources, and improve service delivery. Additionally, there is a need to further develop and modernize reference services to ensure that users receive the right information at the right time in a more effective and user-friendly manner. In conclusion, while the foundation of reference services in Goan public libraries is strong, strategic enhancements—especially in networking, technological integration, and user-oriented service development—are essential to meet the growing and dynamic information demands of users in the digital age.

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